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Chairman:

Mr. MONGBE

(Benin)

CONTENTS

AGENDA ITEM 91: DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION (continued)

(g) HUMAN SETTLEMENTS (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 99: IMPLEMENTATION OF DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 100: SPECIAL PROGRAMMES OF ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 101: INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE FOR THE ECONOMIC REHABILITATION OF ANGOLA (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 93: INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION FOR THE ERADICATION OF POVERTY IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

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The meeting was called to order at 10.00 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 91: DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION (continued)

(g) HUMAN SETTLEMENTS (continued)

Draft resolution on human settlements (A/C.2/48/L.37)

1. Mr. JARAMILLO (Colombia) introduced the draft resolution on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. He noted with concern that insufficient attention to human settlements had resulted in the continuing deterioration of the quality of both urban and rural life. The sponsors hoped the resolution would be adopted by consensus.

AGENDA ITEM 99: IMPLEMENTATION OF DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT (continued)

Draft resolution on the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (A/C.2/48/L.38)

2. Mr. JARAMILLO (Colombia) introduced the draft resolution on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and expressed the hope that it would adopted by consensus.

AGENDA ITEM 100: SPECIAL PROGRAMMES OF ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE (continued)

Draft resolution on assistance to Yemen (A/C.2/48/L.29)

3. Mr. AL-HARTHY (Oman), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the United States of America, Yemen and Oman, said that its aim was to continue the implementation of previous General Assembly resolutions on assistance to Yemen at a critical economic and social juncture for the country. The sponsors hoped the draft resolution would be adopted by consensus.

Draft resolution on international assistance to Sierra Leone (A/C.2/48/L.31)

Draft resolution on assistance for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Liberia (A/C.2/48/L.32)

Draft resolution on emergency assistance to the Sudan (A/C.2/48/L.39)

Draft resolution on assistance for humanitarian relief and the economic and social rehabilitation of Somalia (A/C.2/48/L.40)

4. Mr. BELHIMEUR (Algeria), introducing draft resolutions A/C.2/48/L.31, L.32, L.39 and L.40, on behalf of their respective sponsors, said that natural disaster and armed conflict had severely damaged the economic and social infrastructure of the African countries in question, affected the neighbouring countries and forced thousands of people to become refugees. The draft resolution on Liberia mentioned the signing of the peace agreement at Cotonou, intended to launch the processes of national reconciliation and economic rehabilitation. All the draft resolutions expressed appreciation to the international community for the humanitarian assistance provided thus far and

(Mr. Belhimeur, Algeria)

urgently appealed for its continuation, and the sponsors hoped that they would be adopted by consensus.

Draft resolution on assistance for the reconstruction and development of Lebanon
(A/C.2/48/L.30)

5. Mr. MAHMOUD (Lebanon), introducing the draft resolution, said that its formulation was deliberately simple and left it to the Committee to decide on how the assistance should be implemented. He expressed the hope that the draft resolution would be adopted without a vote.

AGENDA ITEM 101: INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE FOR THE ECONOMIC REHABILITATION OF ANGOLA (continued)

Draft resolution on international assistance for the economic rehabilitation of Angola (A/C.2/48/L.36)

6. Mr. COSTA (Brazil), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the sponsors, said that it built upon and updated General Assembly resolution 47/164. He expressed the hope that national reconciliation would be achieved under the Peace Accords for Angola, thereby paving the way for economic and social rehabilitation. The draft resolution called upon the international community to renew its commitment to providing material, technical and financial assistance to that end. The sponsors hoped the draft resolution would be adopted by consensus.

AGENDA ITEM 93: INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION FOR THE ERADICATION OF POVERTY IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES (A/48/182, A/48/272-S/26108, A/48/291-S/26242, A/48/338, A/48/353-S/26372, A/48/359, A/48/484, A/48/485, A/48/545, A/48/564; A/C.2/48/4)

7. Mr. DESAI (Under-Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on international cooperation for the eradication of poverty in developing countries (A/48/545), said that for many years, national development officials had had to choose between a welfare-oriented focus, which specifically targeted the poor, and the broader approach of improving opportunities for the poor to pursue their own advancement. The latter option encompassed every sphere of development. Thus far, the willingness of the poor to invest in their own advancement had been underestimated and yet it was a crucial factor. Of course, social safety nets and welfare-oriented activities would continue to be necessary for those who were still unable to take advantage of the new opportunities to participate in development strategies.

8. The report of the Secretary-General outlined three broad areas of activities. The first area of activities was strengthening upstream capacities, including not only data collection and analysis but also the redesigning of planning methods. In doing so, the concerns of the poor would have to be taken more fully into account in development strategies. The second area of activities was new partnerships to promote an integrated and participatory approach. Increasingly, the necessity of decentralization and cooperation with non-governmental organizations, local authorities and community organizations

(Mr. Desai)

had come to be understood. The third area of activities was resource mobilization for poverty-oriented activities, in other words, real investment in those assets the poor would exploit for their own advancement. The report covered only field activities in technical cooperation conducted by the United Nations system in order to increase national capacity in those three broad areas. It was hoped that the debate during the current session of the General Assembly and the preparatory process for the World Summit for Social Development would give focus and structure to the various United Nations poverty alleviation funds, programmes, organizations and agencies by the time the Summit was convened.

9. Mr. MONTROYA (Colombia), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, noted that poverty was increasing in the developed countries as a result of unemployment and social imbalances and that it was also increasing in the economies in transition. Nowhere, however, was the situation more urgent than in the developing countries. The slowdown of the world economy had aggravated unequal income distribution, not only between rich countries and poor countries but also between rich persons and poor persons within each country.

10. The implementation of social policies and programmes in the developing countries was being hampered by limited resources and the diminishing role of the State. Meanwhile, unemployment was on the rise while wages were decreasing in real terms. Almost all the cities of the developing countries had become pockets of poverty, characterized by overcrowding, scarcity of water and inadequate services. A child born in a developing country was five times more likely to die in its first year of life than one born in a developed country. The main causes were malnutrition and inadequate health care. In the third world, 1.5 billion people still had no access to basic health care and 800 million people suffered from malnutrition at a time when world food production was sufficient to feed the global population. Whereas in the third world, lack of buying power was the cause of malnutrition, in the developed countries, malnutrition was associated with excessive consumption. Of the 1 billion illiterate persons in the world, 97 per cent were in developing countries. For every \$100 that industrialized countries spent on education per capita, the countries of the South spent barely \$4.

11. Poverty, hunger and lack of opportunity gave rise to continued migration from the third world to developed countries, where immigrants were subjected to xenophobia and open hostility. Poverty was also the main cause of many of the civil wars and social conflicts that forced millions of persons to become refugees. While the United Nations mobilized considerable resources to resolve military and ethnic conflicts in the post cold-war era, policies and mechanisms to help the world's poor - whose numbers would rise to 1.3 billion by the year 2000 - were still lacking.

12. Reducing unemployment was essential in order to decrease poverty and yet developing countries would have to grow at an annual rate of 8 or 9 per cent in order to provide sufficient jobs for their labour force. That growth could be achieved only in an international environment that encouraged the expansion of trade, the opening up of markets, increased capital flows and the transfer of

(Mr. Montoya, Colombia)

technology and expertise to developing countries. To that end, the developed countries must remove barriers to the free and transparent functioning of international markets.

13. Poverty reduction also required the fulfilment of commitments regarding official development assistance. Chapter 3 of Agenda 21 must be fully implemented in order to attain the objectives of sustainable development. The United Nations must strengthen its economic and technical cooperation and human resources programmes for poverty-stricken countries. The Group of 77 would submit draft resolutions containing specific proposals in that regard to the General Assembly at its current session.

14. Mr. VAN DE CRAEN (Belgium), speaking on behalf of the 12 States members of the European Union, referred to their recent observance of the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty. He noted that extreme poverty was a threat to persons in very poor and very affluent societies alike, that it was aggravated at times of crisis and unrest, and that it usually spelled exclusion from social, political and economic life. In recent years the United Nations system had devoted increasing attention to the eradication of poverty. The report of the Secretary-General gave a full description of the work of the specialized agencies and of the Standing Committee on Poverty Alleviation of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the working group on poverty alleviation of the Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions (CCSQ (OPS)). In most other respects, however, it was somewhat disappointing. For example, it contained very little information on activities for the eradication of extreme poverty or on the cooperation of the United Nations system with intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. The description of the poverty alleviation policies, priorities and strategies of developing countries themselves was vague at best. Future reports should provide more information.

15. The European Union noted with interest the "20/20" option advocated by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), whereby donors would allocate 20 per cent of their development assistance and developing countries, 20 per cent of their domestic budgetary expenditure, to human development priorities, including the eradication of poverty. Resources made available under the "20/20" option should be used to improve health care; basic education, particularly for women; access to drinking water; family planning; and rural credit schemes. The European Union supported the approach taken by bilateral, regional and multilateral donors which increasingly linked cooperation for development to adjustment and restructuring programmes but did not overlook the social dimension. In particular, it welcomed the initiative of the World Bank, whose poverty alleviation strategy was based on economic growth and investment in human capital but included a social dimension as well. It hoped that regional development banks would take the same approach.

16. A disproportionate share of the burden of adjustment was borne by those groups which had little or no political or economic clout, particularly in the rural areas. Social safety nets could help mitigate the negative consequences of adjustment; however, the results thus far, particularly in sub-Saharan

(Mr. Van De Craen, Belgium)

Africa, had not been very encouraging. That made it more difficult for countries implementing adjustment programmes to obtain new flows of financial resources, creating a sort of vicious cycle.

17. The first step in poverty alleviation was to increase access to employment. Government, intergovernmental and non-governmental donors had an important role to play in that respect. The eradication of poverty was a primary objective of the cooperation for development policy of the European Union. The Union looked forward to the discussion of the issue in a broader context at the World Summit for Social Development but, at the same time, believed that it must be accorded greater priority in the national policies of developing countries.

18. If poverty alleviation policies, particularly in developing countries, were to be successful, it would be necessary to expand the scope of reform and adjustment programmes in order to create an incentive for private investment and entrepreneurship in general; publicize success stories more widely; adapt the scope, content and pace of adjustment to the circumstances of each country; and recognize that poverty was both a cause and a consequence of environmental deterioration. In addition, population policy must be compatible with sustainable development, and sufficient external financial support must be provided and earmarked for activities that responded to genuine needs. Lastly, the success of adjustment policies and their social dimension depended primarily on mobilizing local populations and authorities.

19. Mr. PALACIOS ALCOCER (Mexico) said that the fight against poverty had become one of the fundamental goals of economic development. The adoption of effective national development policies that took into consideration the needs of the population would make it possible to improve the standard of living of millions of the world's poor.

20. Mexico was currently carrying out an accelerated process of reform, adjustment and modernization in order to stimulate its economy and increase its competitiveness. At the same time, it had sought to strengthen democracy and social justice and improve its standard of living. Mexico's social policy was based on the National Solidarity Programme, whose principal goal was to combat poverty by developing the productive capacity of the most disadvantaged sectors of society and promoting a better distribution of the country's income and wealth. The Programme fostered community participation and the formation of local Solidarity Committees. More than 150,000 such Committees had been established throughout the country.

21. Solidarity had received the social and economic benefits of Mexico's adjustment programme. Mexico had carried out sweeping educational reforms in order to help its population meet the increasing demand for trained personnel. The health sector had benefited from various programmes that sought to improve health facilities throughout the entire country. Over the past five years, a new hospital had been opened every three weeks and a primary health care unit had been opened every day. Solidarity's credit programme in 1,620 municipalities assisted more than 1 million farmers.

(Mr. Palacios Alcocer, Mexico)

22. Mexico had elaborated policies that promoted economic growth while protecting the environment. It had taken measures to control industrial pollution, and had inaugurated the Productive Ecology Programme, which would help prevent the erosion of arable land. The goal of the Solidarity Forest Project was to plant 100 million trees.

23. Mexico's new social policy had led to the creation of the Department for Social Development in May 1992. During the past five years, the Mexican Government had invested over 37 billion new pesos in Solidarity and social spending had risen by 85 per cent in real terms, which had led to an 11-per-cent increase in average per capita income. Mexico owed the success of its social policy not only to increased social spending but also to greater community participation, with assistance from State and municipal governments and non-governmental organizations.

24. Ms. ULLOA (Ecuador) said that, in the developing countries, the poor did not have access to good education or a good diet, and Governments should take measures to educate and feed their people. That was the only way out of underdevelopment.

25. While there was much talk of free trade, the developing countries were having to contend with harsh economic measures, unjust terms of trade, the insufficient transfer of resources to their weak economies and growing external debt. It was difficult for them to make development plans since their efforts to achieve economic stability were thwarted by the international economic environment.

26. The international community should take measures to combat poverty, first of all for moral reasons, since the conscience of mankind could not tolerate the existence of 1.5 billion poor; secondly, for demographic reasons, since population growth continued to be one of the principal causes for the persistence of poverty; thirdly, for ecological reasons, since poverty led to environmental degradation; and, lastly, for political reasons, since poverty jeopardized national and international stability.

27. Mr. BIAOU (Benin) said that, in its activities and programmes to combat poverty, the United Nations should take into account the relevant decisions and recommendations of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, in particular chapter 3 of Agenda 21. It should aim to halve the number of people living in poverty by the first quarter of the twenty-first century, and to eradicate poverty completely by the year 2050. That strategy for the eradication of poverty should be carefully examined. Chapter 3 of Agenda 21 contained no calendar and set no deadlines for the attainment of objectives in efforts to combat poverty. That omission should be remedied.

28. At the conceptual level, it was generally acknowledged that the eradication of poverty called for two basic approaches: job creation and increased family income, and the provision of basic social services and the improvement of food-security and national capacity-building programmes. In order to be effective, those two approaches should be implemented simultaneously, which called for the integration of national strategies and policies for the eradication of poverty

(Mr. Biaou, Benin)

into national development plans and programmes. His delegation was pleased that 89 developing countries had already adopted national programmes of action to achieve the goals of the World Summit for Children, in particular the eradication or reduction of the worst cases of poverty by the year 2000.

29. Before the end of the 1990s, it was essential to take measures to eliminate poverty and promote sustainable patterns of production and consumption. As long as poverty remained endemic in certain areas and regions the world would remain prone to social crises and environmental degradation. International cooperation and solidarity were essential for achieving the fundamental goal of improving living and working conditions for human beings in all parts of the world.

30. Mr. MOMEN (Bangladesh) said that limited resources, high rates of population growth, restricted market access for exports, overdependence on agriculture, and national disasters helped swell the ranks of the poor in the developing countries. The eradication of poverty called for increased domestic savings, investment in productive sectors, economic diversification and the creation of a favourable international environment.

31. The Government of Bangladesh had taken measures to increase domestic savings and encourage investment in productive sectors. It provided special incentives for investment in remote and underdeveloped areas, and its development plans gave priority to agriculture, health, education and family planning. Thanks to a variety of incentives access of the disadvantaged to food had greatly improved. Bangladesh had established a food security system to meet emergencies, and had adopted a programme to provide basic nutrients - rice and lentils - to the poor.

32. Promotion of off-farm activities and small industrial projects in rural areas should receive high priority in any poverty alleviation strategy. Bangladesh had concentrated its efforts on setting up small labour-intensive industries in rural areas and encouraging both the private and public sector to provide credits on very easy terms to landless and marginal farmers. Some local non-governmental organizations, such as the Grameen Bank, had focused on providing loans to landless and destitute village women, who had successfully set up cottage industries or small businesses.

33. The arduous task of reducing poverty should be accompanied by institutional restructuring and decentralized participatory planning to bring the poor and disadvantaged into the centre of development programmes. A favourable external environment was essential for the success of social and economic programmes in developing countries, and a significant increase in the net transfer of resources, the elimination of trade barriers, the growth of export earnings and a durable solution to the debt crisis of the developing countries were crucial in that regard.

34. Mr. OLANIYAN (Observer for the Organization of African Unity (OAU)) said that, over the years, OAU had played a major role in efforts to find lasting solutions to the problem of poverty in Africa. It had established a commission to provide for the immediate and long-term material and financial needs of refugees, including shelter, food, education and steady employment. It had also helped disaster victims become productive members of society by providing them with food, health, shelter, sanitation and income-generating opportunities. In addition, OAU was currently establishing a mechanism for conflict prevention, management and resolution.

35. However, the long-term strategy for the eradication of poverty in Africa was to be found in the context of the African Economic Community, which sought to complement national and subregional efforts to promote economic growth and sustainable development in Africa. Its principal objectives included the promotion of industrial and agricultural development, the development of infrastructure and the enhancement of human development. The African Economic Community would provide a framework in which the economic growth and development of small African economies could be meaningfully promoted.

36. OAU welcomed the efforts of the international community to alleviate poverty in the developing countries. Resource mobilization for poverty-oriented activities was a step in the right direction. The OAU International Conference on Assistance to Africa's Children had called on African Governments to devote a minimum of 20 per cent of their domestic budgetary expenditure to human development priorities and urged donor countries to allocate a minimum of 20 per cent of their official development assistance (ODA) to the same priorities. Other strategies, such as the strengthening of upstream capacities, including data collection and analysis, and new partnerships to promote an integrated, participatory and inter-agency focus on improved technical cooperation were also very important for the eradication of poverty in Africa. The United Nations should intensify its efforts in all those areas.

37. The number of poor in Africa was likely to increase during the current decade, underscoring the need to stimulate growth with investments in health and education. Adjustments might not be enough to bring about substantial changes that would benefit the rural poor. A more broad-based rural development required increased investment in rural roads and the development of research and extension services. At the same time, OAU urged the international community to increase its support for measures to alleviate the adverse social effects of structural adjustment programmes in Africa.

38. Poverty in Africa was intricately linked to the environment. Rainfall generally occurred in erosive downpours, and the pressure on vegetation was greater than in temperate areas. Outside the humid zones, rainfall varied greatly from year to year, and two thirds of Africa's land area faced high or very high risk of drought. OAU welcomed the Organization's efforts to help the African countries cope with agricultural, drought and erosion problems. Such support should be intensified as part of the multifaceted approach to eradicating poverty in Africa.

39. In order to reduce poverty in Africa, the external debt of African countries should be more effectively addressed. In 1992, debt-servicing

(Mr. Olanivan, Observer, OAU)

accounted for about 30 per cent of Africa's export earnings, considerably reducing the capacity of African countries to finance internal development. OAU welcomed the various global initiatives on debt-relief measures which had provided temporary relief to a few African debtor countries. They should be reviewed in order to ensure that they provided more relief to all low-income and middle-income heavily indebted African countries.

40. Mrs. AMERASEKARE (Sri Lanka) said that, agreements adopted by the international community to alleviate poverty notwithstanding, one fifth of the world's population lived in poverty owing to the unequal distribution of resources and opportunities within and among nations. Greater equity in income or resource distribution and human resources development were prerequisites for the success of any poverty alleviation strategy. Country-specific approaches bolstered by international efforts and a supportive external economic environment also were crucial. Innovative policies calling for direct intervention were needed. The member countries of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation had agreed on an agenda of action to combat poverty which focused on the empowerment of the poor, decentralized agricultural development, labour-intensive industrial development, human resources development, including the enhancement of the role of women, and the provision of education, health care and shelter. That agenda could provide a useful framework for action in other regions.

41. Developing countries lacked the resources for poverty alleviation programmes. It was the responsibility of the international community to provide the required resources through aid, debt relief and an open and equitable trading system. Given the current decline in aid and the deadlock in the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations, the importance of debt-relief measures could not be overemphasized. A renewed North-South dialogue also was extremely important.

42. An anti-poverty strategy was vital, for unless due account was taken of those who depended on natural resources for their livelihood, efforts to protect the environment were bound to fail. Priority should be given to poverty alleviation in the allocation of official development assistance (ODA). The emphasis placed by national Governments and bilateral and multilateral funding agencies on poverty alleviation should be regularly assessed.

43. Mr. ACHARYA (Nepal) noted that all least developed countries and some developing countries suffered from abject poverty. The end of the cold war opened new opportunities for economic cooperation for a better future for all. Poverty was a threat to peace and must be attacked at its roots.

44. His delegation was encouraged to note the trends in international cooperation for the eradication of poverty in developing countries described in the report by the Secretary-General on the item (A/48/545). It welcomed the recognition of the need for a multisectoral, coordinated response, and for a two-pronged approach focusing on employment creation and the increase of household income, on the one hand, and provision of basic human services on the other. His delegation also favoured the creation of social safety nets, in particular in the least developed countries.

(Mr. Acharya, Nepal)

45. The Standing Committee on Poverty Alleviation of UNCTAD should be made more effective. In addition to strengthening its data collection and analytical capabilities, the Standing Committee should coordinate the efforts of various groups and teams dealing with poverty issues.

46. Despite the fact that his country was one of the poorest, lacked natural resources and was handicapped by its geophysical situation, its newly elected democratic Government had made poverty alleviation the top priority of its national development programme. His country required international support and believed that the United Nations system should speedily formulate and effectively implement programmes aimed at poverty alleviation.

47. Mr. KRAGHOLM (Denmark), speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries, expressed regret at the late issuance of the report of the Secretary-General on the item under consideration (A/48/545), which had made preparations for the debate somewhat difficult.

48. Alleviating poverty in the developing countries should be a top priority of the international community. Poverty statistics were alarming and showed that the situation was worsening. What was lacking was the political commitment to reallocate resources effectively to alleviate poverty.

49. Governments bore the main responsibility for establishing an environment conducive to combating poverty. They must promote economic growth and employment opportunities for both men and women. Investment in people was a prerequisite for economic development, and investments in basic social services not only helped reduce human suffering, but also enhanced the productivity of labour and stimulated economic growth. The rural poor should be given access to land. Policies concerning women also must be integrated in such key areas as education, reproductive health, agricultural services, credit and income opportunities. The poor, including poor women, must be able to participate actively in the decision-making process in society.

50. Three quarters of the poor in developing countries lived in ecologically fragile areas. Decisive and concerted action must be taken to break the vicious cycle of poverty, population pressure and environmental degradation. Sustainable development, including poverty alleviation, was enhanced by democracy, good governance and public participation. The resources freed by the decline in military expenditures should be used to combat poverty, particularly in developing countries; in that connection he welcomed the "20/20" concept relating to human development expenditures referred to in paragraph 47 of the report of the Secretary-General (A/48/545).

51. The international community should improve market access for products from developing countries, and should contribute to the establishment of an environment which encouraged private sector development and small- and medium-sized industries. It was urgent that the international community make genuine efforts to reach the target of 0.7 per cent of GNP for development assistance and 0.15 per cent for the least developed countries.

(Mr. Kragholm, Denmark)

52. Lastly, he welcomed and encouraged the coordinated efforts described in the report to develop tools for poverty alleviation at the national level. The concept of human development, including poverty alleviation, should be duly reflected in the preparations for, the deliberations during and the outcomes of the forthcoming International Conference on Population and Development, the World Conference on Women and the World Summit for Social Development.

53. Ms. ZHANG Xiaolan (China) cited shocking statistics which indicated that, unless the problem of massive poverty was solved, it would be difficult for people to participate actively in development in any meaningful way or to share equitably in the benefits gained. The eradication of poverty in the developing countries must be a priority development objective for the 1990s and a priority for international cooperation.

54. The experience gained in that area in developing countries, including China, underscored the importance of economic growth and development in efforts to eradicate poverty and the need for an integrated approach and comprehensive development and management measures. Developing countries' efforts must be complemented by strong support from the international community in terms of increased levels of official development assistance, financial flows and technology transfers, improved terms of trade and greater debt relief. International financial institutions should continue to attach high priority to the eradication of poverty. Furthermore, the relevant organs of the United Nations system, which had a comparative advantage and vast experience in their respective areas of competence, should strengthen their efforts to eradicate poverty in developing countries.

55. Her country, which was the most populous and had the highest number of poor people in the world, had made substantial progress in its efforts to alleviate poverty during the past nine years. Nevertheless, it still faced a daunting task, and the Government was ready to strengthen its cooperation with the United Nations and international financial institutions in a common effort to eradicate poverty and achieve sustainable development.

56. Mr. SWETJA (Indonesia) said that the challenge of alleviating the scourge of poverty and its attendant manifestations of hunger, malnutrition and disease was formidable. Since the end of the cold war, there had been a welcome increase in international attention to the question of eradicating poverty, despite the exponential rise in the number of people requiring humanitarian assistance and emergency relief. The report of the Secretary-General (A/48/545) rightly pointed out that coordination and implementation of country-specific technical cooperation programmes were primarily the responsibility of recipient countries. He endorsed the recognition in the report of the need for a two-pronged approach to poverty eradication emphasizing employment creation on the one hand and provision of basic human services on the other. The success of such policies was totally contingent on an external environment conducive to sustaining them and to supporting overall national development efforts.

57. The fact that poverty alleviation was a responsibility to be shared by all countries was clearly reflected in the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade, the outcome of the eighth session

(Mr. Swetia, Indonesia)

of UNCTAD and Agenda 21 adopted at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. The central principles of the Strategy also were reflected in the report of the Secretary-General, including the critical need to promote broad-based people-centred development policies.

58. His country's efforts to eradicate poverty had focused on growth, stability and, in particular, equity. Sustained self-reliance was recognized as pivotal. The necessary infrastructure and support mechanisms were provided, and dramatic results had already been attained.

59. Mr. KAMATH (India) said that the urgency of tackling the problem of poverty and its impact on social and international stability, the environment and sustainable development was underscored by the fact that it was one of the issues to be dealt with in detail at the forthcoming World Summit for Social Development. Efforts to combat poverty required a development strategy combining action to promote economic growth with programmes designed to address specific population categories. In addition to striving to create a favourable international economic climate, it was essential to devise situation-specific approaches to combat the problem of poverty. A complete strategy also must consider the needs of communities and groups that might have been deprived of socio-economic rights and benefits for historical reasons, and must take into account the gender issue, the rights of the child and the needs of youth.

60. Programmes to further such strategies should recognize the right of the poor to food, work, education, good health, shelter and development as fundamental human rights. The right to information as a crucial ingredient for empowerment also was important. Programmes were needed to guarantee a certain level of employment to the rural poor and educated but unemployed rural and urban youth. Integrated women and child development programmes addressing nutritional, educational and health needs, community-based literacy programmes and an alternative market that guaranteed affordable access to basic daily needs also were desirable.

61. His country had pursued such goals through a broad rural employment programme and a far-reaching self-employment programme directed at very small industries and small business enterprises in urban areas. A programme of integrated services for children and an innovative scheme to empower women to gain control over their own resources were being implemented. The people themselves must be involved in the design and implementation of programmes to combat poverty. The poor - women in particular - therefore should be organized, with support from non-governmental organizations.

62. Mr. MSENGEZI (Zimbabwe) said that it was disquieting to note that in some regions poverty was worsening, not improving. During the past decade, poverty had increased in absolute and in relative terms, both in Africa and in Latin America. Africa was the one continent where the number of people living in poverty was projected to increase until the year 2000. The high incidence of poverty was due inter alia to rapid population growth, increasing pressure on limited arable land, inadequate growth of agricultural yields and deteriorating terms of trade, compounded by chronic drought and locust infestation. In

(Mr. Msengeri, Zimbabwe)

addition, economic reforms often had adverse short- to medium-term effects on the supply of social services, employment and income levels, thus aggravating the situation of the poor.

63. His delegation welcomed the integrated approach increasingly adopted by the United Nations system in addressing the problem of poverty. UNDP had identified poverty eradication as one of the six top priority areas during its fifth programming cycle, and the International Labour Organization (ILO) had chosen poverty alleviation as one of the three priority objectives of its work programme for the biennium 1994-1995. His delegation also commended the World Bank for its work on country poverty assessments, which were valuable instruments to national planners charged with the formulation of national poverty alleviation programmes.

64. Special attention should be given to the situation of women, who bore the brunt of poverty particularly in rural areas. Women played a central role in raising children as well as in food production and income generation, and he called on the United Nations system to integrate the needs and priorities of women in its poverty eradication strategies.

65. Mr. COHEN (United States of America) said that while it might not be possible to eradicate poverty completely, the international community must work to alleviate its worst effects. His delegation interpreted international economic cooperation not just as United Nations assistance programmes but as encompassing a whole range of economic interactions both among Governments and within the private sector. With the end of the East-West divide, the General Assembly could look at economic issues in a new way. For that reason, his delegation had sought to shorten the title of the agenda item under consideration to read simply "International cooperation for the eradication of poverty" to reflect the common interests of nations.

66. His Government recognized its obligation to foster an environment conducive to the creation of employment and wealth and the economic empowerment of all sectors of society. Significant reductions in poverty could best be accomplished through the creation of wealth, not simply through its redistribution. The experience of the economies in transition demonstrated that strategies that relied primarily on redistribution led to stagnation. Many developing countries, notably in Asia, had made great advances by adopting policies conducive to sustained economic growth.

67. The United States was determined to conclude the Uruguay Round of trade negotiations to permit continued expansion of international trade opportunities. It was actively engaged in policy dialogue through the international financial institutions and continued to contribute more resources to official development assistance than any other country. In 1994, the United States would enter into the North American Free Trade Agreement with Canada and Mexico. That treaty, the first of its kind to include both developed and developing countries, should raise living standards in all three countries and contribute to the alleviation of poverty in Mexico. It represented a partnership for development through trade, based on mutual benefit and respect.

(Mr. Cohen, United States)

68. The United States was working to rejuvenate its domestic economy and restore balance to its internal and external accounts. It absorbed more developing country exports than any other country, but a stagnant economy could not continue to absorb them at the same rate. If its economy was weak, it could not fulfil its traditional leadership role in maintaining an open world trading system and underwriting a stable international financial system. The United States was prepared to cooperate in drafting a non-confrontational resolution reflecting the new realities all countries faced.

69. Mr. MOHAMED (Sudan) said that poverty was the greatest threat to international peace and security. The democracy to be aspired to should be that of trade and equalization of wealth. The gap between the North and the South was alarming. Developing countries indeed had primary responsibility for their own development, but the international community also had a responsibility to provide an environment conducive to growth through increased financial flows to developing countries, relief of the external debt burden and a balanced world trading system. His Government placed high priority on the eradication of poverty. It had achieved an economic growth rate of 10 per cent and had made policy decisions which had created an environment conducive to external investment.

70. Mrs. SHAHANI (Philippines) said that poverty was a violation of human rights, a threat to peace and an obstacle to sustainable development. Extreme poverty, which forced human beings to devote all their energy to mere survival, deprived human beings of the right to life, dignity, the development of their faculties and freedom. Among the affluent, who had the opportunity for education, conflict was almost always resolved verbally. On the other hand, the poor and illiterate, who had no voice more often resorted to arms. Indeed, poverty was both the source and the result of oppression and conflict.

71. The eradication of poverty was indispensable to sustainable development; the Rio Declaration on environment and development had enshrined that concept in its Principle 5. Efforts to eradicate poverty must, of course, begin with individual countries and Governments. The Philippines had made poverty eradication a major goal of its medium-term development plan. The share of social services and economic services in the national budget each hovered around 20 per cent, while servicing of external debt consumed from 40 to 45 per cent. Accordingly, the international community must work to alleviate the debt burden, improve the international trading environment and promote transfer of technology.

72. Her delegation appreciated the fact that United Nations continued to recognize the importance of the problem of poverty. The Declaration on International Economic Cooperation issued at the Eighteenth Special Session of the General Assembly had recognized that the eradication of poverty was a major challenge of the 1990s. The International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade had also singled it out as a special area of priority, and Agenda 21 had devoted an entire chapter to combating poverty. The United Nations, therefore, had a very important role in marshalling countries to that common task.

73. Mr. SHAARI (Malaysia) said that, for poverty reduction measures to be sustainable, economic growth must be broad-based and must generate income-earning opportunities; in addition, there must be improved access to education, health care and other social services so as to enable the poor to take advantage of those opportunities. While economic growth was critical, it could also be argued that poverty alleviation programmes, if successful, could promote growth, as they expanded the productive capacity of the poor, thus creating effective demand for the next growth cycle. Many East Asian countries, including Malaysia, had been able to reduce drastically the incidence of poverty by facilitating wide participation in the growth process which, in turn, had promoted broad-based economic growth.

74. The real challenge for many developing countries lay in adopting a growth strategy that could generate adequate resources to fund social development infrastructure. Many commodity-dependent economies were caught in a vicious circle whereby investments in commodity production did not generate adequate returns because of falling commodity prices. Thus, it was important to give such basic development issues as debt overhang, weak commodity prices and declining terms of trade proper attention. Structural adjustment measures did not always result in increased capital inflows; while reducing imbalances they raised the incidence of poverty in the process. Without adequate safety nets, poorer population segments would become increasingly vulnerable.

75. An important lesson could be drawn from the experience of some of the East Asian economies: a large proportion of their development budget was targeted towards basic health care and primary education, which benefited the masses. That broad-based approach elicited grass-roots participation and created momentum for growth throughout the population. The people created the progress, while the Government was simply a catalyst. But national efforts in development and poverty eradication were not enough in themselves; the international economic environment must also be conducive to growth. In the face of decreasing flows of direct assistance, it was vital that the global economic system should be as open and fair as possible. The conclusion of the Uruguay Round and the elimination of unfair subsidies and protectionism was of prime concern.

ANNOUNCEMENT CONCERNING SPONSORSHIP OF DRAFT RESOLUTIONS

76. The CHAIRMAN announced that France and Spain had become sponsors of draft resolution A/C.2/48/L.24 submitted under agenda item 98.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS
General Assembly
FORTY-EIGHTH SESSION
Official Records

SECOND COMMITTEE
42nd meeting
held on
Monday, 29 November 1993
at 3 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 42nd MEETING

Chairman: Mr. MONGBE (Benin)

later: Mr. RYSINSKI (Poland)
(Vice-Chairman)

later: Mr. MONGBE (Benin)
(Chairman)

CONTENTS

AGENDA ITEM 91: DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION (continued)

(f) DESERTIFICATION AND DROUGHT (continued)

(i) ENTREPRENEURSHIP (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 99: IMPLEMENTATION OF DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT (continued)

(c) SUSTAINABLE USE AND CONSERVATION OF THE MARINE LIVING RESOURCES OF THE HIGH SEAS: UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON STRADDLING FISH STOCKS AND HIGHLY MIGRATORY FISH STOCKS (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 100: SPECIAL PROGRAMMES OF ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 171: EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE FOR THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC REHABILITATION OF RWANDA (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 102: ASSISTANCE FOR THE RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF EL SALVADOR (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 106: TRAINING AND RESEARCH: UNITED NATIONS INSTITUTE FOR TRAINING AND RESEARCH

AGENDA ITEM 41: EMERGENCY INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE FOR PEACE, NORMALCY AND RECONSTRUCTION OF WAR-STRICKEN AFGHANISTAN

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A/C.2/48/SR.42
31 January 1994

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 91: DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION (continued)

Draft resolution on the renewal of the dialogue on strengthening international economic cooperation for development through partnership (A/C.2/48/L.28)

1. . Mr. WISNUMURTI (Indonesia), introducing the draft resolution, announced that the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and the Group of 77 had joined the sponsors. Given that the core issues of economic growth and development were global in nature, the United Nations, as a universal forum, had a unique role to play in promoting dialogue and partnership. He urged the Committee to adopt the draft resolution by consensus.

(f) DESERTIFICATION AND DROUGHT (continued)

Draft resolution on drought and desertification (A/C.2/48/L.45)

2. Mr. JARAMILLO (Colombia), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, expressed the hope that it would be adopted by consensus.

(i) ENTREPRENEURSHIP (continued)

Draft resolution on entrepreneurship and privatization for economic growth and sustainable development (A/C.2/48/L.34)

3. Mr. MOLDAW (United States of America) introduced the draft resolution which was intended to put into effect the consensus agreements forged over recent years in the entrepreneurship and privatization initiatives. He announced that Benin, Iceland, Lithuania, Mongolia, Morocco and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia had joined the sponsors.

AGENDA ITEM 99: IMPLEMENTATION OF DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT (continued)

Draft resolution on dissemination of the principles of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development (A/C.2/48/L.46)

4. Mr. JARAMILLO (Colombia) introduced the draft resolution on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and said that he hoped that the Committee would adopt it by consensus.

- (c) SUSTAINABLE USE AND CONSERVATION OF THE MARINE LIVING RESOURCES OF THE HIGH SEAS: UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON STRADDLING FISH STOCKS AND HIGHLY MIGRATORY FISH STOCKS (continued)

Draft resolution on the United Nations Conference on Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks (A/C.2/48/L.44)

5. Mr. NANDAN (Fiji), introducing the draft resolution, said that it was essentially procedural in nature and should be adopted by consensus.

AGENDA ITEM 100: SPECIAL PROGRAMMES OF ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE (continued)

Draft resolution on assistance for the reconstruction and development of Djibouti (A/C.2/48/L.33)

6. Mr. BELHIMEUR (Algeria) introduced the draft resolution and expressed the hope that it would be adopted by consensus.

Draft resolution on the special plan of economic cooperation for Central America (A/C.2/48/L.42)

7. Mr. REGALADO (El Salvador), introducing the draft resolution, announced that Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Mexico and the Russian Federation had joined the sponsors. Although significant progress had been made over the past decade, Central America was still in a critical transition period where peace was being consolidated. He expressed the hope that the resolution would be adopted by consensus.

AGENDA ITEM 171: EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE FOR THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC REHABILITATION OF RWANDA (continued)

Draft resolution on emergency assistance for the social and economic rehabilitation of Rwanda (A/C.2/48/L.35)

8. Mr. BELHIMEUR (Algeria), introducing the draft resolution pointed out that the wording of the title and paragraph 1 should be brought into line with that of the agenda item, and that the word "materialization" in paragraph 5 should be replaced by the word "completion". He announced that Belgium, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, El Salvador, Honduras and the Republic of Korea had joined the sponsors, and expressed the hope that the Committee would adopt the draft resolution by consensus.

AGENDA ITEM 102: ASSISTANCE FOR THE RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF
EL SALVADOR (continued)

Draft resolution on assistance for the reconstruction and development of
El Salvador (A/C.2/48/L.43)

9. Mrs. VARGAS DE JESUS (Costa Rica), introducing the draft resolution, whose sponsors had been joined by Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Jamaica, Spain and Suriname, recalled that, as the Secretary-General had noted in his report (A/48/310), El Salvador was embarking on its reconstruction process with an economic base equivalent to that of a quarter century earlier. The past 12 years of political and military conflict had seen the loss of 75,000 lives, the displacement of one half million persons, a mass exodus to other countries and the aggravation of El Salvador's structural, economic and social crisis.

10. In view of the many commitments still to be fulfilled under the Peace Agreement, the need for material and financial support, and the fact that the reconstruction of El Salvador was part of the post-conflict peace-building process advocated by the Secretary-General, the sponsors hoped the draft resolution would be adopted by consensus.

AGENDA ITEM 106: TRAINING AND RESEARCH: UNITED NATIONS INSTITUTE FOR TRAINING
AND RESEARCH (A/48/574)

11. Mrs. WELLS (Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) (A/48/574), said that, in accordance with paragraph 2 of General Assembly resolution 47/227, the UNITAR building had been transferred to the United Nations in return for the cancellation of the Institute's debt and coverage of its financial obligations for 1992. Its headquarters had been transferred to Geneva. With regard to the Assembly's request that a liaison officer be designated to organize and coordinate activities, a senior staff member of the Office of Human Resources Management had been designated as a focal point. That arrangement, designed to realize savings, seemed to be working satisfactorily. The Secretary-General had found ways and means to continue the New York-based training programmes for delegates and still comply with paragraph 3 of the resolution requiring that funding should come from voluntary contributions, donations, special-purpose grants and executing agency overheads.

12. She drew the Committee's attention to paragraph 12 of the report, which described the Institute's current financial situation. The New York-based programmes for delegates had been continued within existing resources by using the services of a senior fellow who had organized such programmes for the Institute previously. Paragraphs 8, 9 and 10 described the programmes which had already been offered. A briefing session on the Security Council would take place from 13 to 17 December.

(Mrs. Wells)

13. Referring to paragraph 14 of the report, she said that accordingly, it was the Secretary-General's intention to enhance the capacity of the United Nations system to respond to the increasing training requirements at the organizational, international and national levels. As the representative of the Secretary-General on the UNITAR Board of Trustees, she would work closely with the newly appointed Board members to that end.

14. Mr. BOISARD (Acting Director, United Nations Institute for Training and Research) said that, although the situation of UNITAR remained unstable, its administrative and financial reform process was beginning to bear fruit. The Institute currently organized some 50 programmes a year, on four continents, benefitting more than 2,000 persons. On any given working day there were, on average, two such programmes being conducted somewhere in the world. In the past two weeks alone, training programmes had been offered in Geneva and in Malawi, Zambia, Egypt, Bangladesh and Thailand. Subregional programmes were about to begin in India and Pakistan and a fellowship programme for officials from the developing countries would be offered in Nairobi at the headquarters of the United Nations Environment Programme. The Institute would also be sponsoring training programmes to promote the implementation of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Lithuania, Viet Nam and Zimbabwe. Before the end of the year it would organize training workshops in French-speaking West Africa, Ethiopia and Cuba. All those programmes were financed from extrabudgetary resources.

15. The qualitative and quantitative development of the Institute's programmes had been achieved by concentrating on disciplines where it enjoyed a comparative advantage and by discontinuing certain programme, including non-priority programmes and programmes which were not particularly unique or valuable or whose stable financing could not be guaranteed. Reforms were being implemented on three fronts: improving existing programmes; developing new methodologies and materials; and making UNITAR, as an operational training instrument, more responsive to the needs of the United Nations system. An example of the first approach - namely, the improvement of existing programmes - was the Fellowship Programme in International Law conducted by UNITAR on behalf of the Office of Legal Affairs. The programme had been completely restructured, yielding spectacular results almost immediately: nearly 180 official applicants for 15 to 20 scholarships. UNITAR had then applied that experience to other fellowship programmes. The Fellowship Programme in Peacemaking and Preventive Diplomacy, for diplomats and high-level officials of the United Nations system had been extremely successful. The Fellowship Programme on Environmental Law and Policy, organized by the Institute for UNEP, had drawn 130 applications for 35 scholarships.

16. The second approach - the formulation of innovative concepts and original training methodologies - focused on specific subjects and on responding to new needs in a changing world. Thus, UNITAR had developed courses on computer systems, negotiating techniques, the legal aspects of international finance. It had prepared innovative training materials, including training software offered free of charge to developing countries, training manuals incorporating the most modern teaching methods and audiovisual materials.

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(Mr. Boisard)

17. The third approach - making the Institute more responsive to the needs of the United Nations system - was beginning to bear fruit. Only months after the launching of a UNEP training programme on the implementation of legal instruments to control the international traffic in toxic products, a UNEP/UNITAR workshop had been organized in South-East Asia in conjunction with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP). In addition, UNEP, UNDP field offices and several newly created States or States with economies in transition, had requested the cooperation of UNITAR.

18. During its year of profound restructuring, the Institute's main concern had been to avoid a financial deficit. As a result, it had met less than one third of the requests it received and had not been able to maintain its continuing education programme in New York. That programme, however, would be a priority objective for 1994. The Board of Trustees had already received proposals in that connection and was aware of the needs and expectations of Permanent Missions to the United Nations in New York.

19. It had focused on training activities at the expense of research; and had developed inter-agency cooperation. While it expected to avoid a financial deficit during the current year, it might well encounter problems in the medium term. Voluntary contributions to the General Fund currently represented less than 10 per cent of what was mobilized for projects. He appealed to Member States for urgent assistance in order to ensure the continuity and autonomy of UNITAR and to enable it to design training programmes in certain diplomatic, economic and social fields which remained relevant for some of the poorer countries.

20. Mr. VAN DE CRAEN (Belgium), speaking on behalf of the 12 member States of the European Union, welcomed the fact that UNITAR had cancelled its debt, transferred its headquarters and carried out substantial restructuring. Those changes should enable it to enhance its efficiency without exceeding its financial means. It was interesting to learn that the Institute had been able to offer a greater number of programmes, particularly for developing countries, in such areas as training in international negotiation and environmental protection by using new, more effective training concepts and methodologies. The Union was pleased that UNITAR had achieved financial equilibrium in 1993, but recognized that its financial situation remained uncertain. Essentially, however, the resources that it would receive from Governments or other financing sources would depend on the success of its training programmes. Voluntary contributions would be the guarantee of its future.

21. Increased cooperation with existing institutions, primarily the International Training Centre of the International Labour Organization at Turin, would be an important step in the Institute's efforts to increase its contacts with governmental, multilateral and regional organizations, bilateral cooperation agencies, foundations, institutes and universities. The European Union recognized the great importance attached by the Secretary-General to

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(Mr. Van de Craen, Belgium)

strengthening the capacity of the United Nations system to respond to the growing training requirements at the international and national levels. It supported him in that conviction and welcomed the establishment of a joint United Nations/ILO task force to explore the better use of the International Training Centre at Turin for the benefit of the training programmes of the two organizations.

22. Mr. KRUEGER (Austria) said that closer cooperation between UNITAR and qualified national, regional and international institutions would be a key element in the continued and growing success of the Institute's activities. In that spirit, the Austrian Government had hosted a Fellowship Programme in Peacemaking and Preventive Diplomacy at Burg Schlaining, and it was ready to cooperate further in the preparation and conduct of training programmes on that crucial issue.

23. Further synergy could be achieved by combining the Institute's activities in environmental management training and training in the management of foreign affairs for newly independent States and countries in transition with already existing national programmes. The Vienna-based International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis could provide international, intersectoral and interdisciplinary analysis of such global issues as the environment, population growth and energy policy. The Institute had supported the International Council of Scientific Unions and the Third World Academy of Sciences in organizing the International Conference on an Agenda of Science for Environment and Development, which had prepared the scientific groundwork for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. The Diplomatic Academy in Vienna had successfully conducted short- and long-term training courses for young diplomats from newly independent States and countries in transition.

24. The reformed and streamlined UNITAR should be able to meet the growing training requirements of Member States and staff in the United Nations system in cooperation with national, regional and international institutions.

25. Mr. ALIOU (Cameroon) said that, while his delegation welcomed the Secretary-General's arrangements for the continuation of the activities of UNITAR at New York, it did not consider that his designation of a focal point was in keeping with the concerns of delegations that had favoured the appointment of an official who would deal exclusively with the Institute's affairs. At the current session, the Second and Fifth Committees should give the Secretary-General the legal and financial means to establish a separate and autonomous UNITAR office in New York.

26. His delegation supported the provisions of paragraph 3 of General Assembly resolution 47/227 and commended the measures that had been taken to establish and strengthen cooperation with national, regional and international organizations, foundations and institutes involved in training in the fields of diplomacy and development. In that regard, his delegation looked forward to the successful outcome of the negotiations on cooperation between UNITAR and the Cameroonian Institute of International Relations.

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27. Mr. ISAKOV (Russian Federation) said that, over the past 15 months, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) had requested UNITAR to design and organize various training programmes, in particular in the management of foreign affairs, for newly independent States and countries in transition. That was an important area of the Institute's activities, and his delegation hoped that, at the next session of the General Assembly, a detailed presentation would be given of the work that had been carried out in that field. In 1993, there had been plans to design and implement special programmes on debt management and financial affairs for the newly independent States of Central Asia and a number of other countries. As far as possible, the number of countries whose representatives could benefit from the Institute's expertise in that area should be broadened to include other States with economies in transition.

28. His delegation fully supported the provisions regarding funding contained in paragraph 3 of General Assembly resolution 47/227.

29. Ms. ZHANG Xiaolan (China) said that, with the conclusion of its reform activities, UNITAR should be able to implement more effectively training programmes on multilateral diplomacy as part of its continuing efforts to train personnel from developing countries. Her delegation was pleased to note that the Secretary-General had heeded Member States' request that multilateral training activities be continued in New York. In order to meet the needs of developing countries, the Secretary-General should arrange training activities in the fields of international economic cooperation, population, environment and the eradication of poverty.

30. In view of its financial constraints, UNITAR should enhance its cooperation with other organs and bodies of the United Nations system. In that regard, she welcomed the forthcoming Fellowship Programme on Environmental Law and Policy, which had been jointly organized by UNITAR and UNEP. Such activities could not only help solve the problem of limited funds but also meet demands for training in various fields.

31. Although its debt problem had basically been solved through its reform activities, the Institute still lacked sufficient resources, and the international community, in particular the developed countries, should increase its financial contributions to UNITAR. In order to support the Institute's training activities, the Chinese Government had decided to donate \$10,000 to UNITAR for its 1994 programmes.

32. Mr. HORIGUCHI (Japan) said that the Government of Japan welcomed the completion of the restructuring of UNITAR in accordance with General Assembly resolution 47/227, and had decided to show its support for the Institute's activities by contributing \$100,000 in 1993. The size of its future contributions would depend on the financial judgement UNITAR exercised, once the changes that had just been adopted had had time to take full effect.

33. His delegation attached great importance to the strengthening of coordination between UNITAR and other qualified national and international institutions as a means of enhancing the Institute's efficiency and effectiveness. In that context, his delegation appreciated the ongoing efforts

(Mr. Horiuchi, Japan)

to coordinate the Institute's programme activities and the International Training Centre of the International Labour Organization (ILO), and hoped that the Secretary-General would keep Member States informed of their progress.

34. Another important issue for the new UNITAR was the transfer of non-training-related research functions to other appropriate bodies of the United Nations system, such as the United Nations University (UNU). The research carried out by UNU was potentially of great value to the Organization in the formulation of policy, and the Secretariat should report as soon as possible on the Secretary-General's study of the proposal to transfer the research functions of UNITAR to UNU and should provide the budgetary implications of such a transfer.

35. Mr. ONONAIYE (Nigeria) expressed the hope that the new Board of Trustees of UNITAR would meet soon and take a more active role in the design, orientation and execution of the Institute's programmes. His delegation assumed that the downgrading of the post of Executive Director of UNITAR reflected a desire to contain operational costs.

36. Referring to paragraph 6 of the Secretary-General's report (A/48/574), he said that the functions of a focal point were clearly at variance with those required of the liaison officer referred to in paragraph 2 of General Assembly resolution 47/227. The Institute's mandate in New York could best be fulfilled by the appointment of a distinct liaison officer, and the immediate action should be taken to do so. The Institute's mandate should be further strengthened through the use of full-time senior fellows, as called for in the UNITAR Statute.

37. In its resolution 47/227, the General Assembly invited the Secretary-General, in the context of the ongoing restructuring process of the United Nations, to continue his work of a comprehensive review of the research capacity of the United Nations system and to make proposals for the enhancement of that capacity. However, care should be taken to distinguish between different kinds of research, including research relating to training, and research done at academic institutions, including UNU. The UNITAR Statute provided for research activity carried out by bodies free from day-to-day pressures, which possessed the practical experience and expertise in their subjects of research. There was no financial or policy consideration that would demand the termination of such research; all that was required was better control.

38. Ms. JANJUA (Pakistan) said that, in spite of its problems, UNITAR had done extremely useful work. Its training activities at Geneva were commendable and had been useful to Member States. Her delegation hoped that similar activities would continue in New York for the benefit of the United Nations and members of the Permanent Missions.

39. Her delegation expressed concern at the incomplete implementation of General Assembly resolution 47/227, in particular with regard to the establishment of a clearly defined liaison office in New York and the

(Ms. Janjua, Pakistan)

continuation of the research work done by the full-time senior fellows. Her delegation was concerned that the United Nations had been slow to make use of the services of Senior Fellows in accordance with the UNITAR Statute, especially since their services had no financial implications for the United Nations system. It appeared that a unilateral decision had been taken to refuse the senior fellows in New York permission to apply for private grants in order to carry out their research activities. The Secretariat must ensure the full implementation of Assembly resolution 47/227, which stressed the need for drawing on the services of the senior fellows. That was especially important in view of the decision of the Institute's Board of Trustees that senior fellows should contribute to the important work carried out by UNITAR in the field of research and analysis. The final decision on that matter should be left to the Board of Trustees when it met in February 1994.

40. Mr. Rysiński (Poland), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

41. Mr. FERRARIN (Italy) drew attention to paragraphs 13 and 14 of the report by the Secretary-General (A/48/574) and said that his Government welcomed the establishment of a joint United Nations/ILO task force to identify possible uses of the International Centre for Advanced Technical and Vocational Training at Turin for their organizations' training programmes. The task force had recommended direct talks between UNITAR and the Centre to identify specific areas of cooperation in existing programmes and to examine possible joint training initiatives, particularly in the fields of peace-keeping, peacemaking, humanitarian affairs and human rights. To facilitate interaction, the task force had proposed assigning some UNITAR staff to the Centre, where they would run existing UNITAR programmes and propose and implement joint educational activities. He would welcome details from the Secretariat on the most recent contacts between the two organizations.

42. In April 1993, the Secretary-General had recommended that the Centre should evolve into a so-called "staff college" that would coordinate and stimulate a network of institutions in a broad spectrum of priority areas, and had expressed his conviction that such joint efforts would help create synergy and contribute to a common culture among various branches, programmes and agencies.

43. UNDP should assist by seconding staff to the Centre and providing financial resources, so as to support the development and expansion of the Centre's current training activities, particularly those designed to build national capacities and enhance development management, for which his country already provided generous financial support.

44. Mrs. SCOTT (Jamaica) said that UNITAR must continue to receive the necessary support and attention which would place it on a sound financial footing and strengthen its capacity to respond to the needs of Member States. Particular attention should be paid to the needs of permanent missions in New York. Her delegation noted with concern the Secretary-General's admission that the financial situation of the Institute remained very fragile.

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(Mrs. Scott, Jamaica)

45. Her delegation welcomed efforts being made to coordinate programme activities and strengthen cooperation with existing institutions. The functions of research and study were particularly essential as the United Nations was increasingly being called upon to embark on largely uncharted grounds. Her delegation also looked forward to the intensification of the research activities of the United Nations University.

46. Mr. ROBLES (Mexico) said that despite the difficulties faced during its restructuring, UNITAR had continued to carry out extensive work, particularly in such areas of interest for the developing countries as the environment, debt and disaster reduction. In view of its precarious financial situation, support for the Institute was crucial, and General Assembly resolution 47/227 should be fully implemented.

47. Given the importance of training activities in New York, steps should be taken to establish a liaison officer post there. The senior fellowship programme provided valuable research input for the work of the United Nations, and it should be borne in mind that the programme did not entail any financial burden for the Organization.

AGENDA ITEM 41: EMERGENCY INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE FOR PEACE, NORMALCY AND RECONSTRUCTION OF WAR-STRICKEN AFGHANISTAN (A/48/323 and Add.1)

48. Mr. HOSSEINI (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that no country in recent history had undergone the hardships that the people of Afghanistan had experienced. Even before the war, the country's resources and economic opportunities had been limited and foreign occupation and a civil war spanning more than 14 years had further reduced the country's meagre resources.

49. The restoration of essential services, reactivation of local economies, resettlement of refugees and clearance of mines were crucial tasks which required the support of the international community. A plan was urgently needed to mobilize financial, technical and material assistance for rehabilitation and reconstruction. His delegation supported the decision by the Secretary-General to dispatch a team of experts to evaluate the situation and to prepare a comprehensive report on requirements for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of the country. The Action Plan for Immediate Rehabilitation should serve as the starting point for a rehabilitation strategy to be presented to a conference of donors by early 1994.

50. Mr. Mongbe (Benin) resumed the Chair.

51. Mr. BATU (Turkey) said that despite the heartening changes which had occurred in the political situation in Afghanistan in 1992, continuing hostilities had slowed the process of political normalization. His delegation appealed to all sides to refrain from using force and to commit themselves to resolving their differences peacefully in order to allow the reconstruction and rehabilitation of the country to proceed.

(Mr. Batu, Turkey)

52. His delegation was sponsoring a draft resolution on the item, which appealed to all Member States in a position to do so to provide all possible financial, technical and material assistance for the repatriation and settlement of Afghan refugees and displaced persons and for the reconstruction of Afghanistan. The international community should respond generously to the Secretary-General's appeal for humanitarian assistance. He commended all the United Nations humanitarian agencies taking part in the emergency programme for their strenuous efforts to remedy the situation in Afghanistan and help to resolve the refugee issue.

53. The draft resolution also sought United Nations assistance in monitoring general elections to be held in Afghanistan in 1994 and requested the presence of the United Nations in the cease-fire monitoring mechanism to be supervised by observers of member States of the Organization of the Islamic Conference. A peaceful atmosphere conducive to free and fair elections, enhanced by international support, would pave the way for the establishment of democracy and stability in Afghanistan and, hence, for regional peace and security.

54. Mr. MOLDAW (United States of America) said that massive international assistance and multilateral aid continued to be required for a variety of reconstruction programmes in Afghanistan. His country had played a major role in providing emergency humanitarian aid and reconstruction assistance to that war-torn country, through multilateral and bilateral channels. It expected its contribution to the general appeal for 1993 to be comparable to those of previous years.

55. Security risks continued to hamper efforts to deliver aid to those in need, particularly displaced persons, and he drew attention, in that connection, to the need for mine clearance activities. They were essential for the safe repatriation of refugees and would enhance prospects for political stability and economic development.

56. As peace and stability were unlikely in the near-term, an international pledging conference on aid to Afghanistan would not be constructive at the current time. His delegation therefore urged the Secretary-General to send a special mission to Afghanistan to discuss with a broad range of Afghan leaders what role, if any, the United Nations could play in facilitating national reconciliation.

57. Mr. AKRAM (Pakistan) expressed his delegation's appreciation for the efforts of the United Nations system to provide assistance for the reconstruction of Afghanistan. The task facing that country was monumental, for its social fabric and economic life had been devastated and its institutions and physical infrastructure had been completely destroyed during a cruel 14-year war.

58. Over six million refugees had begun the arduous process of repatriation; that process was seriously impeded by the presence of land mines. The mine-clearance programme launched by the United Nations therefore was of critical importance for the return of refugees and for the revival of local

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(Mr. Akram, Pakistan)

economies. Noting that \$3.6 million was required for the programme to continue, he said that that sum must be made available immediately.

59. The international community was morally obligated to respond generously to the urgent need for humanitarian and rehabilitation assistance for Afghanistan. It was inappropriate to make the provision of assistance for reconstruction conditional on the resolution of struggles within the country; that would prolong the suffering of the Afghan people and overlook the fact that large parts of the country were completely peaceful. His country had recently pledged its continued support for the reconstruction process and sincerely hoped that the international community would respond decisively and swiftly to the Consolidated Appeal for Emergency Humanitarian Assistance for Afghanistan and to the new appeal to be launched soon.

60. Mrs. VARGAS DE JESUS (Costa Rica) said that the current situation in Afghanistan was one of the most anguished the world was experiencing. The international community must respond to that tragedy, and even the moral support of countries unable to offer more was valuable. Assistance for the reconstruction of that war-torn country must not be denied on the grounds that hostilities were continuing.

61. Mr. ISAKOV (Russian Federation) said that the Russian Federation's participation in the reconstruction of Afghanistan and the strengthening of its economic stability had been discussed in detail during the visit of the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs to Afghanistan in September 1993. The two sides had agreed to resume work on a bilateral Commission on Economic and Scientific and Technological Cooperation and to conduct official negotiations between the relevant departments of the two countries to determine specific areas for bilateral and multilateral cooperation.

62. His delegation supported the provisions of the draft resolution on emergency international assistance to Afghanistan, which called on the international financial institutions and the specialized agencies of the United Nations system to mobilize financial, technical and material assistance to Afghanistan. In that regard, the proposal to expand the UNDP Action Plan for Immediate Rehabilitation into a large-scale strategy for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Afghanistan, as well as the convening of a conference of donor countries and international financial organizations deserved support.

63. The Russian Federation was interested in the speedy stabilization of the political situation in Afghanistan, a traditional trading partner. That and the successful conduct of elections in Afghanistan under United Nations supervision was a prerequisite for the normalization of the situation in the region as a whole and would help attract international assistance and investments in Afghanistan.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.